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Relationships of the Great

Prophet Muhammad Presents His Brother Jesus to Mankind

"… his name is the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary; he is honored in this world and the Hereafter."

Introduction

Why Is He Loved?

Love is the most beautiful and highest value in both religion and daily life. There are many causes for the love of one human being for another. They include an open and cheerful personality, sincerity and truthfulness, loyalty, modesty, rationality, fairness, honesty, fine speech, a pleasant smile, tolerance, attentiveness, generosity and willingness to consult others and to overlook their shortcomings. They also include encouragement of an offender to get back on his feet after having fallen by filling his heart with hope, not causing embarrassment to others, expression of humanitarian feelings, willingness to give, do favors and offer assistance, showing gratitude, appreciating beauty, upholding human dignity and inviolability, an honest desire to teach beneficial knowledge, consistency in word and deed, transparency, willingness to pardon and forgive, preference of peace, promotion of dynamic activity, perfectionism at work and a refined sense of humor.

It is for all these qualities that the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad bin Abdullah, is loved. They were inherent in his personality and could be found on the surface and deep within him, in both his public dealings and his private life. They were the perennial qualities that never abandoned him throughout his personal, family and social life; be it with

his wives, children and grandchildren, companions, and even his enemies. Yes, Muhammad, who is a source of pride for mankind by being the best of its members, is loved for those qualities. Every man of sound constitution, presence of mind and active conscience loves such qualities, for a human being by nature loves everything beautiful.

Indeed, Muhammad bin Abdullah, the Prophet of Islam, is loved for those qualities. He is loved all the more, and in an exceptional way, for another unique virtue, namely, his great love and high appreciation of those leaders of the human race who preceded him, namely, the previous prophets and messengers.

What makes this a virtue that merits deep, intense and unique love? Historical and current events are evidence of a dark and evil tendency that has plagued humanity since it came into being and that still exists today. It is the tendency toward mutual enmity, hatred, envy, rejection and disdain among people of equal status.

Of this predisposition for envy and ingratitude, the Prophet of Islam was completely free. He was completely disassociated from it. But how?

The previous prophets and messengers were similar to Prophet Muhammad in almost every way: in having been chosen by God, having received divine revelations, having delivered divine messages, and having been blessed with an immaculate moral character.

Prophet Muhammad gave a beautiful and highly impressive picture of celebration and appreciation of the prophets and messengers who preceded him. He loved and cherished them all, rejoicing for the past existence on this planet of every messenger who spoke of truth, goodness,

and beauty. He believed in every scripture revealed by God to one of His messengers and spoke of the perfect qualities of every preceding messenger.

It is true that the moral standards of prophets are of such sublimity and magnitude that they cannot be equaled by any human being except one chosen and inspired by God. Yet, to have the names of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus mentioned in the very scripture revealed to Muhammad many more times than his own name is something unprecedented, unusual and most impressive in the realm of divine legislation, ethics and human relationships.

In the Qur'an the name of Abraham is mentioned forty-eight times; the name of Moses, 136 times; the name of Jesus, thirty-six times; while the name of Muhammad is mentioned four times, and Ahmad[1], once. Thus, Muhammad is mentioned by these two names a total of five times only.

The reader can himself calculate the proportions of these messengers' mention in the Qur'an and compare the number of times Muhammad is mentioned with the number of times Abraham, Moses, and Jesus are mentioned in the Book revealed to Muhammad.

This in itself is a scientific and ethical proof that the prophethood of Muhammad is true and certain. No one could reach such a high level of fairness, objectivity and selflessness, giving his peers precedence over himself in profuse commendation, frequent mention and abundant praise – no one other than a true prophet conveying the truth in accordance with what was inspired to him and concealing none of it.

This impression that motivates love for Muhammad is

1 Another name for Muhammad

strengthened by other supporting facts that produce love for him as well. For example:

1. The fact that the Qur'an, revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad, is the record that most precisely documents the biographies of other prophets and messengers, as well as the history of their scriptures, sources, messages, and missions of truth.

First, it is a record of the biographies of previous prophets and of their messages in general terms:

• **«Say, Praise be to God, and peace upon His servants whom He has chosen.»** *(Surah an-Naml, 27:59)*

• **«God chooses from the angels messengers and from the people.»** *(Surah al-Hajj, 22:75)*

• **«And indeed they are, to Us, among the chosen and outstanding.»** *(Surah Saad, 38:47)*

• **«And [We sent] messengers about whom We have related [their stories] to you before and messengers about whom We have not related to you.»** *(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:164)*

Second, it is a record of the lives of previous prophets and their messages in detail. References to and accounts of prophets and messengers occur in various Qur'anic contexts, such as those in Surahs al-An`aam and Maryam:

• **«That was Our [conclusive] argument which We gave Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Indeed, your Lord is Wise and Knowing. And We gave to him [i.e., Abraham] Isaac and Jacob – all [of them] We guided. And Noah, We guided before; and among his descendants, David and Solomon and Job**

and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the doers of good. And Zechariah and John and Jesus and Elias – and all were of the righteous. And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot – and all [of them] We preferred over the worlds.» *(Surah al-An'aam, 6:83-86)*

• **«And mention in the Book [the story of] Abraham. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet.»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:41)*

• **«And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was chosen, and he was a messenger and a prophet. And We called him from the side of the mount at [his] right and brought him near, confiding [to him]. And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron as a prophet.»***(Surah Maryam, 19:51-53)*

• **«And mention in the Book, Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet. And he used to enjoin on his people prayer and zakah and was to his Lord pleasing [i.e., accepted by Him].»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:54-55)*

• **«And mention in the Book, Idrees. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet. And We raised him to a high station. Those were the ones upon whom God bestowed favor from among the prophets of the descendants of Adam and of those We carried [in the ship] with Noah, and of the descendants of Abraham and Israel [i.e., Jacob], and of those whom We guided and chose. When the verses of the Most Merciful were recited to them, they fell in prostration and weeping.»** *(Surah Maryam,*

19:56-68)

2. The fact that Muhammad's religion is a universal religion for all humanity rather than a local or a racial religion. Owing to its universality and appeal to all mankind, Muhammad's heart, soul, and mind was generous enough to accommodate all other prophets and revealed scriptures. He eloquently praised his «brothers» among the former prophets and messengers.
3. The fact that the final message is a complete and perfect one, yet, the Prophet was required to abide by the pattern of previous prophets in the basics of belief, obligations of faith and high moral standards.

«You have a good example in Abraham and those who were with him.» *(Surah al-Mumtahinah, 60:4)*

«These are the ones whom God has guided, so from their guidance take an example.» *(Surah al-An'aam, 6:83-90)*

The reference here is to the succession of prophets and messengers whose names adorn the verse preceding this one.

Indeed, Muhammad is loved for all this: for his personality and moral character in which all the qualities of beauty and perfection are inherent, and for his noble relationship with his brothers among the prophets and messengers who lived in various times at various places and spread knowledge, enlightenment and morality – from Noah to Jesus, the son of Mary, peace be upon them all.

This introduction is a general reference to the relationships on which the book focuses in detail in its following chapters. As we perceive from this relationship the high morality in which the chosen, righteous messengers lived,

wise and magnanimous people of all ages are encouraged to be principled in their relationships with one another by practicing truthfulness, loyalty, dignity and refinement. By so doing, they follow the way of the prophets and messengers.

Among the purposes of sending prophets and messengers on missions to humanity is to provide practical and observable evidence that attaining high morality is possible and workable in actual human life and not a mere mental fantasy. For this reason, prophets were sent as human beings rather than angels.

• **«Their messengers said to them, We are only men like you.»** *(Surah Ibraheem, 14:11)*

• **«Say, I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord – let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.»** *(Surah al-Kahf, 18:110)*

Likeness in species, form, nature and human characteristics ensures the ability of people to follow the example of prophets and messengers in many respects and to emulate them as much as possible in establishing civilized human relationships free from hatred, envy and lack of appreciation and overflowing with love, admiration, honest praise, and positive testimony.

CHAPTER ONE
Unity of the Basic Principles of Prophethood

«Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him.»
(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:163)

Relationships of the Great

Unity of the Basic Principles of Prophethood

Did prophets actually walk this planet of ours, prophets to whom the angel Gabriel delivered scriptures revealed by God? Scriptures that contain:

• Information about God and expressions of love for Him, sentiments of satisfaction and contentment to be living within His dominion and eagerness to meet Him in the Hereafter

• Refinement and fulfillment of the individual human being, and his attainment of reasonable perfection

• Enrichment of collective human life within a framework of education, knowledge, brotherhood, mercy, justice, truthfulness, faithfulness, tolerance, rightfulness, and beauty

Did blessed messenger prophets, with such attributes and messages really walk on this planet of ours?

In answer to this question, the People of the Book, i.e., the Jews and Christians, emphatically affirm that messenger prophets with such attributes and messages did indeed walk this planet of ours at successive periods of time.

This confirmation by the People of the Book is a basic requirement of faith, obligatory by virtue of their belief in God's prophets: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Moses, Aaron, Zachariah, John, Jesus, and the others, peace be upon them all. It is an established tenet of faith for the People of the Book. And Islam regards it as one of the evidences that confirm the prophethood of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) in as much as it relates

to belief in the concept of revelation and prophethood. Verification is in the following verses:

«And We sent not before you, [O Muhammad], except men to whom We revealed [the message], so ask the people of the message [i.e., former scriptures] if you do not know.» *(Surah al-Anbiyaa', 21:7)* The people of the message are the People of the Book, and the message refers to earlier revelations inspired to their prophets.

«And those who have disbelieved say, You are not a messenger. Say, [O Muhammad], Sufficient is God as Witness between me and you, and [the witness of] whoever has knowledge of the Scripture.» *(Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:43)* Those with knowledge of the scripture are the learned ones among the People of the Book.

«Those who follow the Messenger [i.e., Muhammad], the unlettered prophet, whom they find mentioned in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them.» *(Surah al-A'raaf, 7:157)*

«And they did not appraise God with true appraisal when they said, God did not reveal to a human being anything. Say, Who revealed the Scripture that Moses brought as light and guidance to the people.» *(Surah al-An'aam, 6:91)* Those who failed to give God the appreciation due to Him by denying that He was the source of revelation and claiming that God had never revealed to

anyone previously were said to be the Arab polytheists. The irrefutable argument that disproved their claim was confirmation of the scripture revealed to Moses.

«He [i.e., God] has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus – to establish the religion and not be divided therein.» *(Surah ash-Shuraa, 42:13)*

«And indeed, it [i.e., the Qur'an] is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. The Trustworthy Spirit [i.e., Gabriel] has brought it down upon your heart, [O Muhammad] – that you may be of the warners – in a clear Arabic language. And indeed, it is [mentioned] in the scriptures of former peoples. And has it not been a sign to them that it is recognized by the scholars of the Children of Israel?» *(Surah ash-Shu'araa', 26:192-197)*

«Say, Have you considered: if it [i.e., the Qur'an] was from God, and you disbelieved in it while a witness from the Children of Israel has testified to something similar...?» *(Surah al-Ahqaaf, 46:10)*

These are verses that serve as clear evidence, and when combined prove two facts:

1. The fact that the revelation to Muhammad was preceded by revelation to the prophets of the People of the Book, foremost among them being Moses, son of 'Imraan, and Jesus, son of Mary, peace be upon them both.
2. The fact that prophets attest to the truth of one another. Moses attested to the truthfulness of earlier prophets.

Therefore, implications in the Qur'an of the significance of the scriptures revealed to him are coupled with implications of the same significance of the scriptures revealed to Abraham. So evidence for the second fact is also found in the verses below:

«Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses and [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his obligations] – that no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another and that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives and that his effort is going to be seen – then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense – and that to your Lord is the finality.» *(Surah an-Najm, 53:36-42)*

«He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself and mentions the name of his Lord and prays. But you prefer the worldly life, while the Hereafter is better and more enduring. Indeed, this is in the former scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses.» *(Surah al-A'laa, 87:14-19)*

Then Jesus came to attest to the truthfulness of Moses.

«…And [I have come] confirming what was before me of the Torah and to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you.» *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:50)*

«And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the

righteous.» *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:46)*

«And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of God to you confirming what came before me of the Torah» *(Surah as-Saff, 61:6)*

Muhammad, in turn, attested to the truthfulness of Moses and Jesus.

«He has sent down upon you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel.» *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:3)*

«And this is a Book which We have sent down, blessed and confirming what was before it.» *(Surah al-An'aam, 6:92)*

«And that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], of the Book is the truth, confirming what was before it.» *(Surah Faatir, 35:31)*

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) presented a beautiful picture of this coordinated and direct succession of prophets, who succeeded each other chronologically. He said:

«The example of me and the prophets before me is that of a man who built a building, He did it well and completed it except for the place of a brick at one of the corners. People began to walk around it and wonder at the building, saying, Shouldn't a brick be placed here to complete your building? I am that brick and I am the last of the prophets.»

Another narration serves as an explanation of this one by declaring the brotherhood of prophets and the sameness of their faith. Prophet Muhammad said:

«I am nearest to the son of Mary in this world and the

Hereafter. There is no other prophet between him and me. Prophets are brothers from their father, having various mothers; and their religion is one.»

So seekers of the truth may agree and come together on the truth in which all of them believe. Therefore, those who are just among the People of the Book cannot but attest to the truth of what was revealed to Muhammad.

• **«Indeed, those who were given knowledge before it – when it is recited to them, they fall upon their faces in prostration, and they say, Exalted is our Lord! Indeed, the promise of our Lord has been fulfilled. And they fall upon their faces weeping, and it [i.e., the Qur'an] increases them in humble submission.»** *(Surah al-Israa', 17:107-109)*

• **«And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses. And why should we not believe in God and what has come to us of the truth? And we aspire that our Lord will admit us [to Paradise] with the righteous people. So God rewarded them for what they said with gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. And that is the reward of doers of good.»** *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:83-85)*

• **«Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it – they are believers in it. And when it is recited to them, they say, We have believed in it; indeed, it is the**

truth from our Lord. Indeed we were, [even] before it, Muslims [i.e., submitting to God]. Those will be given their reward twice for what they patiently endured and [because] they avert evil through good, and from what We have provided them they spend.» *(Surah al-Qasas, 28:52-54)*

For the sake of belief in the whole truth as revealed to Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and all other prophets, the People of the Book, as well as Muslims, are commanded: **«Say, We have believed in God and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.»** *(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:136)*

The Negus of Abyssinia gave expression to this truth when he said, «There is not the least difference between what was revealed to Muhammad, son of Abdullah, and what was revealed to Jesus, son of Mary.»

CHAPTER TWO

Prophet Muhammad Presents His Brother Jesus to Mankind

«…whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary; distinguished in this world and the Hereafter.» *(Surah Aali ‘Imraan, 3:45)*

Prophet Muhammad Presents His Brother Jesus to Mankind

If the largest and most successful American and European public relations companies convened, cooperating closely, dedicating themselves and utilizing all their human, technical, and material resources to outline a profile of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and offer the most attractive picture of him to mankind, what would the world community say about such an undertaking? How would it describe this endeavor? Undoubtedly, it would describe it as a refined, unbiased effort, and as devotion to the revered Messiah. Many other positive and fitting adjectives could be used for it.

If this should be an imaginary proposal, then there is an actual accomplishment that surpasses it by innumerable degrees in relation to the magnitude of its presentation, depth of its content, sincerity of its style, intimacy of its description and length of its duration.

That religious, historical, humanitarian, and ethical reality is that Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) presented his brother, the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, to the world community in a most superb image. That profile and presentation was not a political campaign subject to the drawbacks and inadequacies that characterize such efforts. In presenting his noble brother, the Prophet of Islam followed a method that is not subject to shortcomings and failings. That method is through the Qur'anic text, which contains no falsehood and has been unaltered with time, and teachings of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon

him), who did not speak of his own accord. The duration of this presentation is not limited to a week, month or year ,s time; rather it extends from the time of its revelation to Prophet Muhammad in the sixth century until the Day of Resurrection. The presentation of the Messiah is not through an obsolete text, or an outdated document preserved in a library or a museum. It is through the living Qur'an, which is recited in prayers, taught at schools and universities, and heard on radio and television day and night.

It is the right of every intelligent reader and researcher to ask intelligently, objectively and seriously about any statement that could be seen as a mere claim, «What is the evidence and proof supporting it?»

The answer is as follows:

First, there is presentation and introduction of the Messiah in the Qur'an:

Presentation of the miracle of his birth: «Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister [i.e., descendant] of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste. So she pointed to him. They said, How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child? [Jesus] said, Indeed, I am the servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and charity as long as I remain alive and [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the

day I am raised alive.» *(Surah Maryam, 19:27-33)*

Presentation of his beautiful character:

«[And mention] when the angels said, «O Mary, indeed God gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary – distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to God].» *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:45)*

Presentation of the miraculous nature of his prophethood and mission: **«God will say, O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit [i.e., the angel Gabriel] and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity. And [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind [from birth] and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission.»** *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:110)*

Presentation of the fact that Gospel revealed to him: **«And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah as guidance and instruction for the righteous.»** *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:46)*

Presentation of his approach and message, which ordered

the worship of God alone: **«I said not to them except what You commanded me – to worship God, my Lord and your Lord.»** *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:117)* This approach also taught people wisdom and pointed out to them the standard for settling differences: **«And when Jesus brought clear proofs, he said, I have come to you with wisdom [i.e., prophethood] and to make clear to you some of that over which you differ.»** *(Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:63)*

And there is proof of it from the Prophet's sunnah (his sayings and teachings). Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

«While I was asleep, I was circumambulating the Ka'bah and there came a brown man with straight hair, between two men against whom he leaned, with water dripping from his head. I said, Who is that? I was told, He is the son of Mary.»

Prophet Muhammad also described his brother, Jesus, son of Mary, as «of medium height and ruddy as if he has just come out of a bath,» which implies purity, brightness, and radiance.

Prophet Muhammad also said, «I am nearest to the son of Mary in this world and the Hereafter. There is no other prophet between him and me. Prophets are brothers from their father's side, having various mothers; and our religion is one.»

He also said, «Whoever testifies that there is no deity other than God, alone with no partner, that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, that Jesus is God's servant and messenger and His word which He bestowed upon Mary and a spirit from Him, and that Paradise is true and Hell

is true – God shall admit him into Paradise according to his deeds.» An-Nawawi, a well known Islamic scholar, commented on this narration, saying, «This is a statement of great significance; it is among the most comprehensive ones about belief.»

Second, there is presentation in the Qur'an of the disciples and followers of the Messiah in an image of utmost grace, perfection and spiritual refinement, for the presentation of the Messiah included the presentation of his noble and righteous disciples:

«But when Jesus felt [persistence in] disbelief from them, he said, Who are my supporters for [the cause of] God? The disciples said, We are supporters for God. We have believed in God and testify that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]. Our Lord, we have believed in what You revealed and have followed the messenger [i.e., Jesus], so register us among the witnesses [to truth].» *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:52-53)*

«O you who have believed, be supporters of God, as when Jesus, the son of Mary, said to the disciples, Who are my supporters for God? The disciples said, We are supporters of God.» *(Surah as-Saff, 61:14)* In this verse Muslims are invited to follow the example of the disciples in supporting the prophets and upholding the way of truth.

Similarly, the disciples receive God's praise in the Qur'an because they followed Christ in all sincerity: **«Then We sent following their footsteps Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those**

who followed him compassion and mercy...» *(Surah al-Hadeed, 57:27)*

Something closely connected to the above and part and parcel of it is the Qur'an's defense of the righteous Christians who clung to their faith and were exposed to great harm but remained steadfast in their religion.

Among them are the young men of the cave, after whom a chapter of the Qur'an is named. These were upright Christian young men pursuing a sound course. The Qur'an praises and commemorates them: «Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? [Mention] when the youths retreated to the cave and said, Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance. So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years. Then We awakened them that We might show which of the two factions was most precise in calculating what [extent] they had remained in time. It is We who relate to you, [O Muhammad], their story in truth. Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.» *(Surah al-Kahf, 18:9-13)*

And among them were are those burned in the trench, also a group of Christians. The Qur'an commemorates them while condemning and denouncing their persecutors: «Destroyed [i.e., cursed] were the companions of the trench [containing] the fire full of fuel, when they were sitting near it and they, to what they were doing against

the believers, were witnesses. And they resented them not except because they believed in God, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy, to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And God, over all things, is Witness. Indeed, those who have tortured the believing men and believing women and then have not repented will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire.»

(Surah al-Buruj, 84:4-10)

In summary, we can say that evidence recurs and each proof supports the other in confirming that Islam presents Christ (peace be upon him), his Gospel, his method, his mission and his disciples in a perfect and most sublime image. It also defends the persecuted Christian believers in a manner that shows love for them and abhorrence for their tyrannical oppressors. I am pleased to offer these statements, supported by evidences, as a gift to the Christians of the world.

If there is a conclusion or statement to be added, it is this: How can Islam be condemned when it offers such a splendid portrayal of Christ? How can light be blamed for being light? Why should the presenting of Christ as sublime and dignified become a pretext to discredit Prophet Muhammad and his religion?

We believe in Christ as a prophet and a messenger of God. We love and esteem him, and we follow the light he brought. If others do not believe in our prophet – belief being a matter of free choice – let them at least respect him. Such respect is not only morally praiseworthy, but would also demonstrate a sensible attitude, for reasonable people appreciate and respect those who respect the ones they love

and believe in.

Now as in the past, the intolerance of Muslims and Christians and exchanges of insults between them appears absurd. It can only be instigated by small minded people when viewed in light of the sound, sincere and honorable relationship between the two great men: Muhammad and Jesus Christ.

Do the Christians of the world know that belief in the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, as a prophet and messenger is one of the basic elements of belief for every Muslim? It is even a condition for the soundness of every Muslim's belief in Prophet Muhammad in the sense that a Muslim's belief in Prophet Muhammad is unacceptable and rejected unless it is combined with belief that Jesus, the son of Mary, was a prophet and messenger.

Do the Christians of the world know this fact?

Some of them do, particularly Christians of the Arab world who speak Arabic, for their knowledge of the language allows them, for example, to consider this Qur'anic verse:

«Say, [O believers], We have believed in God and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.» *(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:136)*

Some Christians know this fact, but the majority do not. It is most likely that, together with other factors, their lack of knowledge of this fact has caused a great deal of misunderstanding in the way they have responded to Islam.

However, he who does not know cannot be an authority over people who do know; rather, the opposite should be true.

Moreover, it is an obligation at all times to state openly that a Muslim,s belief is unacceptable unless he believes in the prophethood and mission of Jesus, the son of Mary. It is not permissible to withhold this acknowledgment just because of some people,s hostility to Prophet Muhammad. In this context a question might be raised: Why should Muslims not resort to the same tactics as the people who disparage the status of Prophet Muhammad and curse and slander him? The same tactics, of course, means disparaging, cursing, and slandering Jesus, son of Mary. But this is regarded in Islamic law as disbelief. Such an act would cast the offender out of the religion of Islam. For Muslim believers there is no difference between insulting or ridiculing Christ and insulting or ridiculing Muhammad. None would differentiate between them except a disbeliever in all the prophets and messengers. In fact, he would not be a true believer in God. The Qur,an says: «Indeed, those who disbelieve in God and His messengers and wish to discriminate between God and His messengers and say, We believe in some and disbelieve in others, and wish to adopt a way in between – those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. But they who believe in God and His messengers and do not discriminate between any of them – to those He is going to give their rewards. And ever is God Forgiving and Merciful.» *(Surah an-Nisaa’, 4:150-152)*

The essence of the above statements is that religious

acceptance of all prophets without any discrimination between them is the basis of moral tolerance. The extent to which the mind, heart, and soul of an individual or a nation is broad enough in capacity to accept the whole truth is an indication of the extent of one's tolerance.

But individuals and nations continue to exchange accusations against one another, each claiming to be tolerant and accusing others of partiality. In most cases when doing so, both sides are merely following their own whims and inclinations due to lack of a sound criterion by which to judge, one which would put a stop to such arguments and injustices. But what is the true criterion?

The best and most precise criterion that can be put on the scales of justice to measure the honesty of people, the correctness of their ideology, the soundness of their thought and the superiority of their moral standards is the extent to which their minds, hearts, and souls accept the whole truth and revere and love upholders of truth at every time and place.

Only by this criterion can a person be described as tolerant and another as biased. A person who is broad minded enough to accommodate the whole truth, unaffected by a tendency to be selective, and who acknowledges bearers of truth, regardless of when or where they might appear, is a truly tolerant person. And needless to say, one who is unable to do so will be intolerant. That is why it is one of the aims and tenets of Islam that Muslims are obliged to accept in their hearts, minds and souls the whole truth at all times and places. **«[God] has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what We enjoined**

upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus – to establish the religion and not be divided therein.» *(Surah ash-Shuraa, 42:13)*

Those five great men, the true leaders of enlightened human thought, who are addressed and mentioned in this verse, are the messengers of resolute purpose. They belong to different places and times as regards birth, residence, circumstances and missions, and they cover the long span of human history from Noah through Abraham, Moses and Jesus up to the time of Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

In spite of the diversity of locations and long intervals of time between them, the truth they preached and advocated is the same truth as is vividly expressed in the verse above. Thus, what can be called the «line of truth» is a permanent one, continuously extending into every time and place.

Genuine affiliation is attachment to truth and righteousness and to those who possess them. (This, however, does not imply disregard of the importance of lineage or of belonging to a homeland, for in Islam there is no conflict between these affiliations.) We have not ourselves seen Prophets Idrees, Noah, Moses, Jesus, his disciples or Elisha, but we love and revere them all. Why? Because they were good, righteous people and they had noble souls and high moral standards; and also because the truth and principles they upheld are worthy of being adhered to, and make it commendable to be associated with those great men.

The beloved Jesus is a revered prophet and messenger. Islam, both in its divine scripture and its prophetic teachings, praises, venerates and exalts the position of Jesus. Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, presented Jesus

to the human community in a most affectionate, dignified, generous and exceptional way.

This is the great rank of the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, as stated in the Qur'an and in Prophet Muhammad ,s sunnah. In Islam, respect for him is one of the basic elements of the creed.

We testify that we believe in the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, as a prophet and messenger. We also testify that we love him because he is loved and was chosen by God, because he embodied mercy, peace and love. He was blessed, dutiful to his mother and a sign for the people of all times (peace be upon him).

* * * * *

Jesus preached many values, precepts, concepts, and moral principles. He persevered in his preaching to make sure these moral values would flow naturally into man ,s consciousness and become an inalienable part of his conscience and the life of his society. Some examples of these values may be cited:

Mercy, which is the first and noblest characteristic of Christ's personality and of his message, as stated in the Qur'an: **«We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:21)* This characteristic was instinctively very clear in his mind, and therefore he denied the existence of any vestige of haughtiness or arrogance, the opposite of mercy, in his own nature: **«And [God made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant.»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:32)* He is quoted in the Bible as saying, «Blessed be the meek and merciful. Come to me all you who are tired and burdened and you will find comfort,

because my yoke is gentle and my burden is light.»

Peace, of which Jesus, the Messiah, was without doubt, an advocate. This is not strange, for there was peace upon him from his birth to his resurrection, as stated in the Qur'an: **«And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive.»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:33)*

Correct belief, as he said: **«O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed, he who associates others with God – God has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire.»** *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:72).*

CHAPTER THREE
Prophet Muhammad Presents Mary, the Mother of Jesus

«O Mary, indeed God has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world.»

(Surah Aali ‘Imraan, 3:42)

Relationships of the Great

Prophet Muhammad Presents Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Every Muslim loves Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and invokes God's blessings on him whenever he remembers the blessing of monotheism, savors the meaning of worship, recites the Qur'an, holds his head high with a sense of freedom and pride, engages industriously in virtuous work, is charitable to others and adheres to the course of moderation in thought, speech, action, and conduct. In all these situations, a Muslim's supplication for blessing upon the Prophet fills his heart and is constantly pronounced by him, for all that is good in him has been achieved through the Prophet's guidance.

Actually, all mankind is indebted to this kind, noble Prophet. It is he who allowed humanity to make the great leap forward by giving great importance to reason, promoting thought and contemplation, freeing the will and conscience from the shackles of paganism and oppression, establishing principles of equality, establishing humanitarian cooperation among nations and peoples, introducing principles of justice and applying them even to adversaries, observing and elevating the value of the common human heritage, and defending righteous persons, irrespective of their customs or environments, rightfully, effectively and generously. This treatise is an elaboration of the last point.

One of the proofs of the truthfulness of our Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) is that he advocated a religion that promotes belief in the whole truth, i.e., truth not subject to partiality, exception or annulment. This is

a rational and methodological issue; truth can never be divided or self-contradictory in its essence or its source.

The Example of Mary

It has been alleged that Jesus, son of Mary, had a half-brother. Islamic religious institutions were quick to refute that statement because it undermines the reputation and blemishes the chastity of the truthful Mary, who never married.

Which text distinctively testifies to the Virgin Mary's chastity, purity, and lack of contact with men?

It is the Qur'an, which was inspired to Muhammad. That enlightening book establishes firm conviction relating to pure Mary, one that affirms the truth and repudiates falsehood and slander.

One of the characteristics of the Qur'an is that it defends upright, faithful people regardless of their race, nationality, time, place or gender. Mary, who was among the righteous servants of God, is described in the Qur'an in the best manner and context. The Qur'an defends her with an irrefutable argument that produces love and veneration for her.

She was protected from Satan:

«And I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants from Satan, the expelled [from the mercy of God].» *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:36)*

She was honored by God,s blessing: **«Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, O Mary, from where is this [coming] to you? She said, It is from God. Indeed,**

God provides for whom He wills without account.» *(Surah Aali ‘Imraan, 3:37)*

She was chosen over all women: **«O Mary, indeed God has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.»** *(Surah Aali ‘Imraan, 3:42)*

She was devout and she prostrated herself and bowed to God: **«O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow [in prayer].»** *(Surah Aali ‘Imraan, 3:43)*

She received of tidings of a child who would be great and honored: **«[And mention] when the angels said, O Mary, indeed God gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary – distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to God].»** *(Surah Aali ‘Imraan, 3:45)*

She is acclaimed in the Qur’an: **«And mention, [O Muhammad], in the Book [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east.»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:16)*

She was a sign for all mankind: **«And We made her and her son a sign for the worlds.»** *(Surah al-Anbiyaa’, 21:91)*

«And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign.» *(Surah al-Mu’minun, 23:50)*

She was truthful: **«And his mother was a supporter of truth.»** *(Surah al-Ma’idah, 5:75)*

She was a chaste virgin who never married or had contact with any human being:

«And mention, [O Muhammad], in the Book [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east. And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel [i.e., Gabriel], and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man. She said, Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so leave me], if you should be fearing of God. He said, I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy [i.e., son]. She said, How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste? He said, Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, «It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.» So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten. But he called her from below her, Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream. And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates. So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, «Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man.» Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister [i.e., descendant] of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste. So she pointed

to him. They said, How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child? [Jesus] said, Indeed, I am the servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and charity as long as I remain alive and [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive.» *(Surah Maryam, 19:16-33)*

This is the righteous Mary as presented in the Qur'an - pure and purified, blameless and irreproachable, chaste and immaculate - when she conceived and when she gave birth, untouched by any human being. It was God who made her conception and delivery a miracle from Him, and He does as He wills.

It is noteworthy at this point to mention that some People of the Book cite the Qur'an as evidence when they speak of Mary's purity. To discredit the claim that Christ (peace be upon him) had a half-brother, a number of high-ranking clergymen of the Coptic Church in Egypt cite the words of Mary quoted in the Qur'an: **«She said, How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:20)* This is unquestionably a point of common belief.

It is true that some Jews slandered Mary and said evil things about her, but the Qur'an denounced these atrocious claims of theirs as an expression of disbelief:

«And [We cursed them] for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander.» *(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:156)*

I conclude this chapter with something highly relevant in this context. Our assertion that Muhammad, the Messenger of God, has a claim on all mankind is supported by the following facts:

The Prophet’s mission was a new and qualitative reorganization of human existence. The components of this reform are respect for the human mind, the designation of personal responsibility, encouragement to harness whatever is in the heavens and earth for the service of man, a declaration of the oneness of the human race, among other advancements.

When wise people become aware that there are some existing historical documents that do justice to and defend their religion as well as their eminent and righteous personalities, their wisdom should prompt them to cherish these documents. Accordingly, wisdom should prompt wise Christians and Jews throughout the world to respect the Qur’an and the person to whom it was revealed, for the Qur’an is the document that best commends the religious figures in whom they believe.

To cite an example, Mary (may God be pleased with her) was not an Arab. However, the Qur’an, which condemns and prohibits racism in concept and practice, glorifies and extols Mary, because it is the scripture that upholds the true criteria for distinguishing between people, the criteria of sincere belief, righteous deeds, and high moral standards.

Is it not the right of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) who brought the religion that offers a most magnificent picture of all the prophets and their followers, to be recognized and appreciated by all mankind?

Relationships of the Great

CHAPTER FOUR

Prophet Muhammad Presents His Brother Moses

«And mention in the Book, Moses…»
(Surah Maryam, 19:51)

Prophet Muhammad Presents His Brother Moses

Muhammad fasted ‘Ashuraa to express pleasure at the delivery of his brother Moses and his people from oppression.

Therefore, the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians, should not be offensive toward God’s Prophet, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). For any person of fairness, refinement and nobility would be eager to show loyalty to a man who supported his father, honored him and recognized his status. Would a person then not feel the same toward one who has presented with warmth and admiration to humanity the pioneers of his civilization and architects of his moral existence?

What is the source of moral existence for Jews and Christians? It is the Old Testament, which was revealed to Moses, the son of ‘Imran, or the New Testament which was revealed to Jesus, the son of Mary. The light emanating from those books was conveyed to people and to human life by these two prophets. How, then, was the relationship between Muhammad and those two great prophets, Moses and Jesus?

I have already demonstrated the firm, sublime, and close relationship between Muhammad and Christ. Our Prophet presented the best image of Christ in a most beautiful, dutiful, and appealing way. This chapter will be devoted to the relationship between Prophet Muhammad, son of Abdullah, and his brother in prophethood, Moses, son of ‘Imran.

Following the example of their Prophet (blessings and

peace be upon him), many Muslims fast on the tenth day of the month of Muharram in the Jijri calendar. The origin of this tradition is that Prophet Muhammad fasted on that day, following the example of Moses and expressing his pleasure at the latter's escape, along with his people, from oppression, persecution and torture. Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have narrated that God's Messenger (blessings and peace be upon him) arrived in Madinah and found Jews fasting on the day of 'Ashuraa. He said to them, «What is this day on which you are fasting?» They said, «This is a great day on which God saved Moses and his people and caused Pharaoh and his people to drown.» God's Messenger said, «We have more claim to Moses than you do.» So he fasted that day and urged Muslims to do the same.

The story of how Moses and his people were freed from Pharaoh's persecution, injustice, and cruelty is a joyful story that was inspired to Muhammad. It is part of the Qur'an, read and recited by Muslims one generation after another. As they read it they are thankful to God for the great favor He bestowed on Moses and his people:

• **«And We had inspired to Moses, Travel by night with My servants and strike for them a dry path through the sea; you will not fear being overtaken [by Pharaoh] nor be afraid [of drowning]. So Pharaoh pursued them with his soldiers, and there covered them from the sea that which covered them, and Pharaoh led his people astray and did not guide [them]. O Children of Israel, We delivered you from your enemy, and We made an appointment with you at the right side of the mount, and We sent down to you manna and quails.»** *(Surah Ta Ha, 20:77-80)*

• **«And [recall, O Children of Israel], when Moses said to his people, Remember the favor of God upon you when He saved you from the people of Pharaoh, who were afflicting you with the worst torment and were slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.»** *(Surah Ibraheem, 14:6)*

This is a celebration of the great victory at which the Prophet of Islam rejoiced, fasted on its anniversary and urged Muslims to fast on it to express thanks to God.

The story of the escape is told in eloquent Qur'anic style that conveys a true account of Moses. It is an account that is also related in detail in the Prophet's sayings.

First: Moses is described in the Qur'an:

1. In general terms: **«And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was chosen, and he was a messenger and a prophet. And We called him from the side of the mount at [his] right and brought him near, confiding [to him]. And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron as a prophet.»** *(Surah Maryam, 19:51-53)*
2. And in detail: **«And We inspired to the mother of Moses, Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him [one] of the messengers. And the family of Pharaoh picked him up [out of the river] so that he would become to them an enemy and**

a [cause of] grief. Indeed, Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiers were deliberate sinners. And the wife of Pharaoh said, [He will be] a comfort of the eye [i.e., pleasure] for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son. And they perceived not. And the heart of Moses mother became empty [of all else]. She was about to disclose [the matter concerning] him had We not bound fast her heart that she would be of the believers. And she said to his sister, Follow him; so she watched him from a distance while they perceived not. And We had prevented from him [all] wet nurses before, so she said, Shall I direct you to a household that will be responsible for him for you while they are to him [for his upbringing] sincere? So We restored him to his mother that she might be content and not grieve and that she would know that the promise of God is true. But most of them [i.e., the people] do not know. And when he attained his full strength and was [mentally] mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge. And thus do We reward the doers of good.» *(Surah al-Qasas, 28:7-14)*

«[God said], Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed [i.e., tyrannized]. [Moses] said, My Lord, expand [i.e., relax] for me my breast [with

assurance] and ease for me my task and untie the knot from my tongue that they may understand my speech. And appoint for me a minister [i.e., assistant] from my family – Aaron, my brother. Increase through him my strength and let him share my task that we may exalt You much and remember You much. Indeed, You are of us ever Seeing. [God] said, You have been granted your request, O Moses.» *(Surah Ta Ha, 20:24-36)*

Detailed accounts also include the beautiful, scholarly presentation in the Qur'an of the Torah, the scripture revealed to Moses:

«Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light.» *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:44)*

«But how is it that they come to you for judgement while they have the Torah, in which is the judgement of God?» *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:43)*

«And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion.» *(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:53)*

«Then We gave Moses the Scripture, making complete [Our favor] upon the one who did good [i.e., Moses] and as a detailed explanation of all things and as guidance and mercy that perhaps in the meeting with their Lord they would believe.» *(Surah al-An'aam, 6:154)*

Second: Prophet Moses in the words of his brother, Prophet Muhammad:

A Jew approached the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and said, «Muhammad, one of your companions struck

me on the face.» The man was brought in, and the Prophet said, «Why did you strike his face?» He said, «O Messenger of God, I passed by the Jewish man and heard him say, By Him who has selected Moses over all human beings I said, And over Muhammad? I was angered and struck him. The Prophet said, Do not prefer me over Moses. People will lose consciousness on the Day of Resurrection and I will be the first to recover. I will see Moses holding on to one of the Throne's legs. I will not be able to tell whether he had recovered before me or whether he was compensated for fainting on Mount Sinai»

The Prophet presented a picture of his brother, Moses, as being blessed with a great deal of modesty. He said, «Moses was a very modest and discreet man.»

The Prophet was physically harmed by some people, and remembered the character of his brother, Moses. He said, «May God have mercy upon Moses; he was exposed to greater harm than this, but he endured it.» So our Prophet followed the example of his brother Moses in enduring harm as he was commanded by God: **«So from their guidance take an example.»** *(Surah al-An'aam, 6:90)*

One day the Prophet came out to meet his companions and told them, «Nations were paraded before me, and I saw a horde so great that it concealed the horizon. It was said, This is Moses with his people.»

Finally, the Prophet made a point of mentioning Moses whenever there was an occasion to do so. During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet passed by al-Azraq Valley, and asked, «What valley is this?» People said, «Al-Azraq Valley.» He said, «I can almost see Moses descending the mountain pass and raising his voice declaring to God that he is there at His service.»

This is the position of God's prophet, Moses, son of 'Imran, as he is presented in the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is a high position of reverence and dignity. Hence, protecting Moses from abuse is basis for protecting our Prophet and all other prophets from it. Moreover, to refrain from insulting Moses and other prophets is one of the aspects, consequences and proofs of belief in God, who said in the Qur'an: **«O you who have believed, be not like those who abused Moses; then God cleared him of what they said. And he, in the sight of God, was distinguished.»** *(Surah al-Ahzaab, 33:69)*

Thus, he is distinguished in God's sight, which implies high rank, lofty position, and noble qualities. We know this from the Qur'an, which was revealed to Muhammad, and also from the words of Prophet Muhammad himself, who loved Moses, followed his example, and constantly referred to and spoke well of him.

Therefore, we know of no logical or moral reason that would make a normal person from among the People of the Book dislike or dishonor God's final prophet, Muhammad. What reason could there possibly be for it? Could it be Muhammad's belief in, love for, and devotion to God? Could it be his concentrated effort to liberate man from servitude everything and everyone other than God? Could it be his proclamation of the basic unity and dignity of the human race? Could it be the wide scope of his religion, which was capable of encompassing belief in all the divine scriptures and the messengers preceding him? Could it be his love of benefit for every human being, rather, for every living creature? He expressed this each morning by saying, «O God, whatever blessing I or any other of Your creatures

have this morning comes from You alone, who has no partner. So praise and gratitude are due to You.»

What could the reason possibly be? Could it be because God sent him as a mercy to humanity? Could it be because he led the world's greatest and most enlightened awakening? Could it be because he elevated the status of reason, education and knowledge? Could it be because he opposed superstition, hypocrisy, and illusion? Could it be because he struggled against oppression, tyranny, and injustice?

Could it be because he declared that kindness to a thirsty dog was the means by which a prostitute had obtained forgiveness and salvation? Or because he was gentle, kind, modest and unassuming? Or because he was faithful to everyone that was good to him and endeavored to return the favor even if that person remained a polytheist until death? Or because he strictly kept promises and honored agreements? Or because he responded to an offense by forgiving and overlooking it? Or because he loved purity, cleanliness and beauty, teaching that God is beautiful and loves beauty? Or because he sought refuge in God from depression over property, family and children? Or could it be because his character was comprised of comprehensive moral values, as is indicated by God ,s description of him:

«And indeed, you are of a great moral character.» *(Surah al-Qalam, 68:4)*

Is there a normal human being who is offended by the blooming and scent of roses, the brightness and sublimity of perfection, the advent of light, the purity and profundity of knowledge, the rationality of thought, the dignity of conscience or the concurrence between a kind word and a kind act?

CHAPTER FIVE
Pioneer of the Greatest Awakening in Human History

«The example of that with which Allah has sent me of guidance and knowledge is like a rain that falls on the ground, part of which is good, absorbing the water and producing much pasture and grassland. This is the example of one who is knowledgeable in the religion of Allah and benefits from that with which Allah has sent me, so he learns and teaches.»

(Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

(1)
Beauty and Love in the Prophet's Words and Actions

He is a human being. This is an undisputed fact: **“Say, ‘I am only a human being like you’”** *(Al-Kahf 18: 110).*

The likeness and correspondence between him and mankind in this, i.e. being human, emphasize two absolute facts, which are:

A. The genetic or biological nature of all human beings, with no exception, and

B. The fact of denying that human beings and all other creatures have any divine nature, for God is one and has no partner in divinity.

While being equally human emphasizes these two facts, it by no means diminishes the special, superior status of the last prophet and messenger, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

While the differences between the status of divinity and that of prophet must be acknowledged and sustained, Prophet Muhammad must have all the veneration, reverence, and respect that are due to him:

“Do not raise your voices above that of the Prophet, and do not speak to him as loud as when you speak to each other, lest your actions would fail without your feeling it.Those who speak with soft voices in the presence of God’s Messenger are the ones whose hearts have been tested by God for piety. They will have forgiveness and a great reward” *(Al-Hujuraat 49: 2-3).*

Despite the copious volumes written by various authors about the Prophet, the clear and pure stream of his qualities and sublime manners continues to flow, in an abundant flux, revealing further noble, lofty, and superior traits with which believers quench their thirst for spiritual amelioration and from which every person with determination to become a better human being drinks.

Let us then dip two scoops, which are beauty and love, out of his words and actions, blessings and peace be upon him.

First: Beauty

The Prophet was sent with abundant instructions and purposes. One of these is the purpose of beauty, in the sense that he had the task of teaching people about "beauty" and revive their sense and awareness of it. For God, praised be He, is beautiful, the Quran is beautiful, and the universe is beautiful. Being sent to teach people about this universal beauty, he, undoubtedly had the best share of it. He was characterized by:

I. The beauty of smiling. Yes, smiling is a type of superior beauty. It is also a universal human language in the sense that if we see, on television for example, a Korean, German, Senegalese, or American, or a national of any other country, smiling, we understand that he is smiling, with all the elation, joy, and human affection suggested in the act of smiling. Such a picture is a beautiful one, the opposite of a picture of depression, gloom, and frowning.

   This is why one of the most important things that public relations trainees are told is to smile. They

are taught how to smile and how to keep smiling. Linguists say that smiling, a prelude to laughter, is a facial expression of cheerfulness, in which one's teeth are a sign of pleasure and joy.

Smiling, therefore, is one form of beauty. The Prophet was known to smile throughout the day and throughout his life. He smiled more than any other person. Jareer (One of the Prophet's companions) is quoted as saying, "God's Messenger never declined to see me since I embraced Islam. He never saw me without smiling at me." The Prophet was not only characterized by the beauty of his smiling, he also promoted smiling and encouraged others to smile. He says, "Your smiling at your brother is an act of charity." He also says, "Do not underrate any good action, even if it is just meeting your brother with a buoyant face," i.e. a cheerful, smiling, reassuring face.

II. The beauty of handsome appearance. The Prophet used to wear the nicest clothes available to him. He groomed himself when preparing to meet delegations in a manner appropriate for him and for them; that is, he dressed what is compatible with the status and traditions of each delegation. He liked perfume. 'Aisha (the Prophet's wife) says, "I used to apply to the Prophet the best scent available." He prohibited any person who had eaten onions or garlic to get inside the mosque. He endorsed beauty in general as one of the things loved by God. He says, "God is beautiful and loves beauty."

III. The beauty of gentleness in behavior, action, and

speech. He, blessings and peace be upon him, says, "When gentleness gets into something, it can only adorn it, and when removed from something, it can only disfigure it." Thus, gentleness is an adornment, i.e. beautiful, while violence is an ugly, repulsive thing. The Prophet carried all his affairs with gentleness, and, consequently, urged gentleness in all affairs, both public and private.

IV. The beauty of tenderness:

A. He used to shorten a prayer when he heard an infant crying, in consideration of a mother's anxiety for her child.

B. Once he stopped the advance of an army out of concern for a bird grieving for its babies, which were captured by some soldiers. The army resumed its advance only when the baby birds were returned to their mother.

C .He avoided direct, face-to-face reproach. He would rather say something like, "What about those people who feel too proud to do something which I myself do?"

D. He indulged children and joked with them. Anas says, "The Prophet was so friendly with us that he used to say to my little brother, "Hey, Abu 'Umair, what has the birdie done?" (A playful, rhyming question in Arabic.)

E. He approved and encouraged recreation in his house. 'Aisha says, "I used to play with dolls at the Prophet's, and I had playmates who played with me. When God's Messenger came in, they felt shy, so he would let them pass on to me and play with me."

F. He said, "Let not any of you say, 'I have a devilish

impulse,' but rather, 'I have a strong inclination' …." Ibn Hajar, in Al-Fatth, quotes Al-Khattaabi as saying that "'strong inclination' and 'devilish impulse' are similar in meaning, but the Prophet disliked the 'devilish' adjective and opted for the safer expression. It was his habit to substitute an unpleasant name with a refined one. This tradition implies that unpleasant vocabulary should be avoided." The point here is that avoiding an expression like 'I have a devilish impulse' is an act of tenderness towards oneself.

G. The beauty of tenderness includes devising various ways to honor one's wife. The Prophet used to offer his knee for his wife Safia to step on it when she wanted to mount a camel.

H. He preached God's "tenderness" with his people. He says, "When God created His creatures, He wrote down in His book, which He has on the Throne, 'My mercy outweighs my anger.'"

Second: Love

Many genuine and venerable words are used to a point where they are almost shunned or debased. Such a word, which one fears may be abandoned or misused, is "love." Love, however, is actually a basic religious principle. It is the basis of great relationships that are most sublime and closest to perfection.

Love is the origin of one's relationship with God, for God loves people who repent and who purify themselves: "God loves those who turn to Him in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves pure" (Al-Baqarah II: 222). He loves people who are patient, people who are

charitable, people who put their trust in Him and turn to Him, and people who are fair-minded.

Belief is a plant, adorned with love, sown by God in the believer's heart: **"But God has made belief appeal to you and adorned it in your hearts"** *(Al-Hujuraat XLIX: 7).*

Hence, the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, was an advocate of love in both his words and through his actions. He says:

I. "No one may taste the sweetness of belief until he, when he loves another person, loves him only for the sake of God; until being cast into the fire is more agreeable to him than relapsing into disbelief after God has rescued him from it; and until God and His Messenger are loved by him more than anybody else."

II. "By Him Who has my soul at His disposal, you will not be admitted into paradise before you believe, and you will not truly believe before you love each other."

III. Some one asked, "God's Messenger, who is the person you love the most." He said, "'Aisha." He was then asked, "And of men?" He said, "her father."

IV. One of his prayers that expressed love and penitence is: "God, give me the gift of loving You and loving any creature whose love serves me well with You. God provide me with things I love to turn them into a force I use for what You love, and as for the things I love that You keep from me, let them be a free time for me spent in what You love."

In this one tradition the word "love," and one of its

derivatives, are repeated seven times. This has a very clear significance: that love is the most important and greatest of all values and relationships.

V. On the relationship with locations that expresses gratefulness, the Prophet says, “Uhud is a mountain we love, and it loves us.”

Let all the followers of Muhammad, as well as all other people, renew their sense and their strong awareness of the beauty in religion and in the universe, and of love, which is the basic principle of all intimate, bright, sensible relationships. After all, without beauty and love, there is no true religious devotion and no sound life on Earth. Could either be realized through ugliness and hatred?

(2)
Wishing for the Good and Happiness for All Humanity

The gist and all-inclusive element of Islam is constant refined manners, constant so that they do not alter, and refined so that they do not deteriorate. Faith, action, worship, judiciary activity, and many other things are only multiple, diverse ways, tools, and approaches to constant refined manners. For example, what is the underlying principle of fasting? It is refined manners. Here is the evidence in the form of statements of the Prophet:

A .“When someone does not refrain from false statements and from actions based on them, God has no need for him to give up his food and drink.”

B. “Fasting is not [refraining] from eating and drinking. Fasting is rather guarding oneself from falling into error and obscenity. If someone swears at you or abuses you, say, ‘I am fasting! I am fasting!’”

Therefore, manners should be an element taken into consideration in every matter that concerns human beings, because when such matters are discussed without reference to manners, they seem to leave their objectives and purpose behind and divest the subject under discussion of its meaning and usefulness, turning it into a form without content or a layer of painting with no surface behind it.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit a number of states in the U.S.A. People have come up with many religious and secular explanations that try to find reasons for these events. It is the right of people to ask “Why?” when a universal or

a human event occurs. Man is curious, investigative, and eager by nature, and nobody has the right to suppress such human characteristics. As it is the right of people to ask, it is a scientific and ethical duty to try to offer a correct answer.

Gloating over the misfortune of others has never been a correct response, a sound acknowledgment, or a satisfactory ethical conduct in reaction to such disasters.

I. The decent or normal thing to do is to wish for the good and happiness of people, all people. Otherwise, why are missions assigned and messengers sent? God has no need for people. Therefore, be sure that religion is for the good and happiness of people, to extend mercy to them and relieve them of any grief. Undoubtedly, to gloat at the misfortune of some people, when some misfortune has happened to them, is a type of behavior that is incompatible with how people should normally react or with that great religious purpose.

II. The Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, used to start his day with this delightful, human-divine prayer that expressed penitence: “God, whatever gift is enjoyed by me or any other of Your other creatures this morning is from You alone, Who has no partner. Thus, praise and thankfulness are due to You.” This merciful, tender, and gentle prophet, whose heart is big enough to admit all humanity, thanks his Lord on behalf of all people and all other creatures for all the gifts God has bestowed on them. For the phrase “or any of Your other creatures” encompasses all people, which is the first purpose of the prayer—yes, all people, Muslim or non-Muslim. For God is the

Lord of all human beings, not of Muslims alone. Every human being has his own share from the Godhood in that he is created, has supplies, and gifts bestowed on him. The Prophet is certainly the most eloquent of all speakers, so when he says, “or any of Your other creatures,” it is exactly and specifically the denotation of humanity in general that he means by the phrase. The expression of thankfulness to God for the gifts He bestows on all human beings is but an honest expression of wishing for the well-being, and happiness of all mankind. Could then this prophet, who thanks God for all gifts granted to all people, gloat at a misfortune or a hardship suffered by anyone? The answer is a most definite no. A heart that is so pure and so merciful has no room for gloating or rejoicing at others’ misfortunes. Combined with this is a profound philosophical implication, namely, that rejoicing at every gift bestowed by God on any human being is concomitantly associated with its antithesis in feeling, conception, and purpose, and that is hating to see people suffer any distress, misfortune, or misery. Moreover, overflowing mercy and gloating cruelty cannot exist side by side in the same heart.

III. Speaking of mercy brings to mind the Prophet’s tradition in which he says, “God has no mercy for any one who shows no mercy to others.” In explaining this tradition, Ibn Battaal, as quoted in Fatth Al-Baari, says, “It signifies encouragement to extend mercy to all creatures, and that includes Muslims and non-Muslims; and beasts both owned and free.” It is universally acknowledged that mercy towards people

and gloating at their misfortune, which means feeling happy to see them grieve, are irreconcilable, mutually exclusive opposites.

IV. Rescuing and saving people is one of the moral precepts in the Islamic system. No person who gloats over the misfortunes of others can be characterized by such sublime, radiant, and useful moral values, because his logic and his attitude consist in refraining from relieving a non-Muslim in distress and waiting until he perishes or comes to harm to gloat at his misfortune. If a non-Muslim catches a disease, such a person would offer him no treatment, but would rather wait till the disease gets more critical so that he may have the joy of gloating at such suffering. If a person of that type is an experienced swimmer or diver, he would not try to save a drowning non-Muslim, but would rather let him drown to gloat at his death. If you are of this type, do not offer assistance to an orphan who is in a dire need for help, but enjoy watching him in his condition, because that is how you gloat at his adversity. All this would be contrary to the instructions of Quran verses on rescue and assistance. These include, for example, the following verses: **"Yet he would not scale the Ascent. • Would that you knew what the Ascent is. • It is the emancipation of a slave, • or the feeding, on a day of famine, • of an orphaned near of kin, • or a needy man in distress"** *(Al-Balad 90: 11-16).*

V. The Quran tells us that gloating and rejoicing at the misfortunes of others is a characteristic of abnormal persons who are mentally sick and whose standards are so muddled that they make a habit of rejoicing

at the misfortunes of others: **“When good fortune comes your way, it grieves them; and if evil befalls you, they rejoice”** *(Aal ‘Imran 3: 120).*

How can Muslims be superior in their ethics and manners if they imitate such aberrant people in this shameful, strange feeling, the feeling of exaltation at the calamities of other people and of dejection when God bestows one of his gifts on other people.

VI. Gloating at others’ misfortunes incurs the malicious implication of envy. Abu Hamed Al-Ghazaali says, “This is the worst type of envy. When you are hurt by some one for one reason or another and he opposes you over something in one way or another, your heart may fill with anger at and hatred for him, and you may develop a strong grudge against him. A grudge calls for wishing to see him suffer and avenging yourself, and if you are unable to make him suffer yourself, then you would wish that fate would make him suffer.” If this happens, you may believe that God, the Most Sublime, has honored and vindicated you. Whatever disaster befell your enemy would please you, and you would believe it to be a reward from God to you for hating that person, and that it happened only for your sake. While whatever blessing befell him would displease you because it would be against your desire.

It is well-known that Islam rigorously forbids envy, its motives, forms, and purposes. Therefore, even if gloating at others’ misfortune had no implication other than envy, a Muslim should free and purify himself from it, both in the way he feels and in expression.

VII. Inviting non-Muslims to Islam has special psychological and moral keys and approaches. Foremost among these is flexibility, kindness, and refined and noble human compassion; promising words that carry good tidings; smiling and cheerfulness; warm affection; and great concern for, and honest interaction with, people's problems and worries. A person who gloats at misfortune is definitely devoid of these refined qualities and gifts. Thus, he is incapable of inviting others to God's religion, because he actually drives them away from it by blocking the entrances and portals through his harshness and insensitivity.

VIII. The Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, once told Mother of Believers 'Aisha, may God be pleased with her, some of his memories of painful times in Makkah. He said, "I suffered a lot at the hands of your people. The worst suffering I experienced was on the Day of 'Aqaba. I approached Ibn Abd Kilaab with my message, and he declined to accept it. I went my way, with concern showing on my face. I regained my composure only when I was in Qarn Al-Th'aaleb. I looked up and I found a cloud giving me shade. As I looked at it, I saw in it Gabriel, peace be upon him. He called me and said, 'God, the Most Sublime, heard what your people said to you and how they answered you. He has sent you the King of Mountains and you can command him to do to them whatever you wish.' The King of Mountains called me and said, 'Muhammad, God heard what your people said to you, and I am the King of Mountains. God sent me to you to do what you bid me. If you wish, I can clamp down

the Akhshabain, [two great mountains in Makkah,] and squeeze your people in between.' I said, "I rather wish that God will bring out of their loins people who worship Him alone, and nothing else with Him.'"

The Prophet received the support of the elements of nature at a time of hardship. He had the opportunity to take revenge against his oppressors and those who were unjust to him. It would have been expected of him, under such circumstances, to have wished for the destruction of these people. But being a man with lofty ideals, who came to bring life and happiness to people, he was unwilling to have his antagonists perish. He could rise above the desire to see them dead and the inclination to gloat at their misfortunes while they perished, because he, being mercy itself to mankind, knows only mercy, whatever the case may be.

IX. Muslims are commanded to speak to others in an amiable, kind manner:

A. **"Tell My servants to say that which is best"** *(Al-Israa 17: 53)*.

B. **"Contend with what is best, and then the one you have been at enmity with behaves as a close supporter"** *(Fussilat 41: 34)*.

C. **"Speak kindly to people"** *(Al-Baqarah 2: 83)*.

It is certain that gloating over other people's misfortune is not conducive to speaking in an amiable, kind manner, which Islam makes obligatory for Muslims in dealing with others.

X. Islam forbids any feeling of joy when others suffer harm, even if those others are non-humans, i.e.

animals. It is thus not permissible in Islam to rejoice at the distress of oxen, dogs, or cocks when they fight and suffer pain. Could Islam then forbid rejoicing at the harm suffered by animals and yet sanction feelings of joy at the harm, distress, calamities, hurricanes, and other causes of human suffering?

XI. The highest aspects of monotheism are two in number:
the worship of God alone with no partner, and charity towards His creatures, human beings and others, and wishing good and happiness to mankind at large. There is no charity to people whatsoever in gloating at their misfortune; it is rather an offense to them. Therefore, it is a terrible decline from a high aspect of monotheism and faith. The integrating link of the two aspects is realized through the coupling of fear of God (“Fear God wherever you be…”) with charity to people (… and deal with people in a nice manner”). The two aspects are combined in one of the traditions of the loving Prophet.

Relationships of the Great

(3)
Pioneer of the Greatest Awakening in Human History

More than 1,400 years ago Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam who taught humanity about truth, beauty, mercy, and perfection, stood in the plain of Arafah declaring what is known today as human rights. He promoted human dignity and the inviolability of life, honor, and property. He called for equality before religious and secular law, peace and order. He advocated respect for and appreciation of women. These and many other principles he proclaimed loud and clear during the great farewell pilgrimage, where 100,000 Muslims had gathered.

This was an awesome and splendid conclusion to the Prophet's work over a period of twenty three years. What he accomplished during that time – an extremely brief one compared to the usual development of civilizations – is the establishment of the greatest and most profound movement of enlightenment in all human history. This statement calls for some elaboration, so we will quote from a group of non-Muslim intellectuals who spoke of this renaissance full of light and promise.

In his book A Study of History, the British historian, Arnold Toynbee, says that the genius of Muhammad was instrumental in enabling him to deliver his Lord's message to his people, and the history of Arabia is closely associated with that. Toynbee adds that in 622, the situation radically changed to the advantage of Muhammad and his mission when a group of people from the agricultural oasis of Yathrib

(Madinah) came and asked him to move to their town and be in charge of their affairs. Following that, Toynbee writes, «Islam spread throughout the world and had a profound impact on it.»

The brilliant Irish physicist, John Desmond Bernal, says in his encyclopedic Science in History that to the negative elements then prevailing, among which was the void in which the world was then living, a positive element was suddenly added. That element, he says, was the emergence and rapid spread of a new international religion. Bernal adds that the linguistic, religious, and administrative barriers which existed up to the seventh century, limiting each culture to its own region, suddenly disappeared almost everywhere between the Indian and Atlantic oceans. Islam, he says, spread brotherly love among all races, prescribed the same rites for all its followers and based its philosophy on monotheism. It was a religion firmly rooted in the hearts of people.

The well-known Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru says in his book, Glimpses of World History, that what is truly surprising is that the Arab nation, which had been forgotten for many generations and was isolated from the world around it, suddenly came to life brimming with activity and energy, amazing the world and completely changing it. Nehru describes the outpouring of Arabs into Asia, Europe, and Africa with the refined culture and brilliant civilization they introduced throughout the world as one of the wonders of history, and adds that Islam was the actual driving force of that renaissance through the culture it introduced and the confidence and vitality it inspired.

This elaboration itself needs a further elaboration. For

among the patterns of the great renaissance led by the Prophet of Islam are the following:

First is the intellectual awakening, which was the true beginning. For there can be no real renaissance in any field in the absence of intellect and reason. Therefore, we may calmly and confidently assert that the mind was the key to the enlightening renaissance led by the Prophet of Islam, as well as its motivation and method.

That is the rational, systematic explanation of this fact. Arabia, as well as the whole world, was in a state of mental blackout, and intellectual stagnation was the pervasive and dominant condition. Obviously, it is impossible for awakening, liberation, enlightenment and progress to take place while reason is dormant and mental stagnation is prevalent. Therefore, the logical and practical priority was for restoration of reason and stimulation of the inactive mind, allowing it to operate at maximum capacity.

This systematic precedence is evident in various Qur'anic contexts. For example:

Stimulation of thought through sharp analytic consideration of one's self and the universe: **«Do they not contemplate within themselves? God has not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth and for a specified term.»** *(Surah ar-Rum, 30:8)*

Drawing attention through comparisons: **«Say, Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.»** *(Surah az-Zumar, 39:9)*

An intensive, continuing campaign against blind imitation and practices which are not supported by reason,

logic, evidence and proof: **«And when it is said to them, Follow what God has revealed, they say, Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing. Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?»** *(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:170)*

The second pattern in the great renaissance led by the Prophet of Islam was one that resulted from that powerful rational and intellectual awakening. The release of energy inherent in reason and logic produced an objective, scientific approach based on study in dealing with the universe. Hence, the progress of humanity started with knowledge of existence and dealing with matters related to it.

It is once again appropriate to quote some intellectual non-Muslims, who speak with knowledge and honesty about the foundations of scientific revival.

John Desmond Bernal says that Islam progressed suddenly, and the reason for its spread was that education and science became greatly energized. «Islam,» he says, «became the meeting point for Asian and European knowledge, and then from that combined current flowed a series of inventions that were not known or available to Greek and Roman technology.»

A second scientist documenting this fact is Herbert G. Wells, who in his book A Short History of the World, testifies that many forms of progress in the fields of mathematical, medical and natural sciences were achieved by Muslims. «Undoubtedly,» he adds, «they realized great developments in metallurgy and succeeded in its technical application. This application was of utmost importance and had a profound influence on the revival of physical sciences in Europe.»

A third is the historian, Paul Kennedy, who states this fact in his book The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. He wrote that a great part of the European cultural and scientific heritage has actually been borrowed from Islam and Muslims.

The third pattern is the model of human and religious tolerance. Two examples will suffice here:

In his book, Controversy About Zion, Douglas Reed quotes a clear and honest statement by St. Augustine. The statement is that Islam gave economic freedom to non-believers, allowed them to run their own affairs and was tolerant in dealing with the followers of other religions. He goes on to say that the unimpaired prosperity that Judaism enjoyed under Islamic rule could never have been realized in the early days of Christianity.

The second example is what the renowned Jewish thinker Israel Shahak says in his book Judaism. He wrote that the expulsion of Jews was practically unknown in Muslim lands, because it contradicts Islamic Law.

The fourth pattern is the proclamation of the unity of the human community during that early time when racial, national, tribal and ethnic prejudices, even among members of the same clan, were dominant.

The unity of the human community is expressed in God's glorious Book:

• **«O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul.»** *(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:1)*

• **«O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of**

you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you.» *(Surah al-Hujuraat, 49:13)*

More than 1,400 years ago, the Prophet of Islam stood on the plain of ‘Arafah to proclaim human rights to the world and to lead the greatest illuminating renaissance in the whole history of mankind.

A prophet having made such an outstanding contribution to the progress and fulfillment of mankind must have his right acknowledged by all humanity. Muslims express loyalty to him by following and adhering to his teachings. Non-Muslims should at least appreciate and respect him as a great pioneer who offered much to mankind: numerous branches of science and scholarship, knowledge and education, values and ethics. He taught mankind how one ,s relationship with his Lord, with his fellow human beings and with the entire universe should be.

Hence, any offense aimed at the Prophet of Islam is not only a gross expression of racism and religious prejudice, but also an act of moral ingratitude, whether coming from an individual or an entire culture.

Relationships of the Great

CHAPTER SIX
Muhammad: His Position with God and Status Among Muslims

«And We raised high for you your repute.»
(Surah ash-Sharh, 94:4)

Relationships of the Great

Muhammad: His Position with God and Status Among Muslims

God described Himself as Wise and Knowing. So He chooses what He wills by knowledge and wisdom.

• **«And it is He [i.e., God] who is [the only] deity in the heaven, and on the earth [the only] deity. And He is the Wise, the Knowing.»** *(Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:84)*

• **«Indeed, my Lord is Subtle in what He wills. Indeed, it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise.»** *(Surah Yusuf, 12:100)*

With His all-encompassing knowledge and infinite wisdom, He selects from humanity prophets and messengers.

«God chooses messengers from the angels and [messengers] from the people. Indeed, God is Hearing and Seeing.» *(Surah al-Hajj, 22:75)*

The selection is, therefore, neither accidental nor random. Moreover, prophets were not men who planned to become prophets; rather, they were granted prophethood unexpectedly, and God chose them through His knowledge, wisdom, consideration and benevolence. For example, prophethood had never occurred to Moses, but he was chosen by God to be a prophet and messenger.

«And has the story of Moses reached you? – when he saw a fire and said to his family, Stay here; indeed, I have perceived a fire; perhaps I can bring you a torch or find at the fire some guidance And when he came

to it, he was called, O Moses, indeed, I am your Lord, so remove your sandals. Indeed, you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa. And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed [to you].» *(Surah Ta Ha, 20:9-13)*

And through His knowledge and wisdom, God also chose Muhammad to be a prophet and messenger out of the millions of people who lived in the early seventh century AD, telling him:

• **«Recite in the name of your Lord who created – created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous – who taught by the pen – taught man that which he knew not.»** *(Surah al-‘Alaq, 96:1-5)*

• **«And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command [i.e., the Qur’an]. You did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, [O Muhammad], you guide to a straight path – the path of God, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Unquestionably, to God do [all] matters evolve [i.e., return].»** *(Surah ash-Shuraa, 42:52-53)*

• **«And indeed, [O Muhammad], you receive the Qur’an from one Wise and Knowing.»** *(Surah an-Naml, 27:6)*

And He said about him:

• **«Muhammad is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of God and seal [i.e., last]**

of the prophets. And ever is God, of all things, Knowing.» *(Surah al-Ahzaab, 33:40)*

The Exalted Position Given to Muhammad by God

A person chosen by God, the Wise and Knowing, who chooses with wisdom and knowledge, must be an exceptional human being: worthy, noble and truly respectable. We know this from the words of God revealed to prophet, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). In the Qur'an, God praised His chosen prophet, Muhammad, and exalted his status, saying:

• **«O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner.»** *(Surah al-Ahzaab, 33:45)*

• **«And raised high for you your repute.»** *(Surah ash-Sharh, 94:4)*

• **«And indeed, you are of a great moral character.»** *(Surah al-Qalam, 68:4)*

• **«And be patient, [O Muhammad], for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you are in Our eyes [i.e., sight].»** *(Surah at-Tur, 52:48)*

• **«Indeed, God confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [God to confer] blessing upon him and ask [God to grant him] peace.»** *(Surah al-Ahzaab, 33:56)*

• **«He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed God.»** *(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:80)*

•**«So fear God, O you of understanding who have**

believed. God has sent down to you a message [i.e., the Qur'an]. [He sent] a Messenger [i.e., Muhammad] reciting to you the distinct verses of God that He may bring out those who believe and do righteous deeds from darknesses into the light.» *(Surah at-Talaaq, 65:10-11)*

• **«O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not. Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of God – they are the ones whose hearts God has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward.»** *(Surah al-Hujuraat, 49:2-3)*

• **«And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.»** *(Surah al-Anbiyaa', 21:107)*

He is to God, as described by Him, a witness for and against mankind, giving testimony that is fair and just according to the standards of right and justice with which he was sent. He is also a bringer of good tidings and the advocate of all goodness, truth, beauty and perfection. He is the illuminating lantern whose reputation is forever exalted and whose character was most sublime. As he moved or was motionless, spoke or acted, delivered his message, guided, taught and advised, he was lovingly watched over, guarded, and protected by God. Angels and believers invoke God's blessings on him; obedience to him is in fact obedience to God; no voice may be raised above his. He embodied God's mercy to all humanity, continually supplicating to God and reminding people of Him through his words, deeds, manners and conduct.

With Prophet Muhammad enjoying this venerable position in the eyes of his Lord, God has Himself undertaken to defend His beloved, chosen prophet and messenger.

«Whoever should think that God will not support him [i.e., Muhammad] in this world and the Hereafter – let him extend a rope to the ceiling, then cut himself off, and let him see: will his effort remove that which enrages [him]?» *(Surah al-Hajj, 22:15)* . Among the connotations of this verse is that anyone who thinks that God will not support His prophet is deluded to the extent that he becomes confused and troubled and will eventually perish, because it is certain beyond any doubt that God will support His Prophet.

«If you do not aid him [i.e., Muhammad] – God has already aided him when those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Makkah] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he said to his companion, Do not grieve; indeed God is with us.» *(Surah at-Tawbah, 9:40)*

«Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers.» *(Surah al-Hijr, 15:95)*

And when one of the polytheists described the Prophet as being «cut off,» that is, having no offspring, God responded through His words to the Prophet: **«Indeed, We have granted you the greatest abundance. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off.»** *(Surah al-Kawthar, 108:1-3)*

After Abu Lahab insulted the Prophet and said, «May you be ruined the rest of the day,» God responded by saying: **«May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and ruined is**

he. His wealth will not avail him or that which he gained. He will enter to burn in a Fire of blazing flame, and his wife [as well] – the carrier of firewood.» *(Surah al-Masad, 111:1-4)*

Muhammad's Place in the Hearts of Muslims

The number of Muslims (followers of Muhammad) is now estimated to be one billion and four hundred thousand. They represent all races, colors, languages, and backgrounds. When adding to this the number of Muslims who have lived on earth for the past 1,428 lunar years, from the time Muhammad was sent as a messenger to the present, the number is multiplied many times over. All those billions of Muslims have loved Prophet Muhammad with true, deep and sincere love, love that is stronger than that for their family members and even themselves. **Why?**

1. They love him because they believe in the existence of God and His oneness, in His ability to reveal scriptures and send messengers and in His absolute and infinite wisdom in doing so. He did not create human beings for no reason and without a program of guidance. **«Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned? So exalted is God, the Sovereign, the Truth; there is no deity except Him, Lord of the Noble Throne.»** *(Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:115-116)*

From the very beginning, when God sent Adam down to the earth and charged him with responsibility, He decreed that He would send a program to guide humanity to what is best, one to be conveyed by His prophets and messengers.

«We said, Go down from [Paradise], all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance – there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.» *(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:38)*

God has fulfilled His promise. Actual history testifies that humanity has witnessed a successive procession of prophets and messengers, from the time of Noah and ending with Muhammad. This history is consistent with in God's words in the Qur'an: **«Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And We revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon; and to David We gave the book [of Psalms]. And [We sent] messengers about whom We have related [their stories] to you before and messengers about whom We have not related to you. And God spoke to Moses with [direct] speech. [We sent] messengers as bringers of good tidings and warners so that mankind will have no argument against God after the messengers. And ever is God Exalted in Might and Wise.»** *(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:163-165)*

2. They love him because God, who exists and is one, the all-Capable, all-Knowing, all-Wise, and who, out of mercy for mankind sent them messengers, chose Muhammad and presented him to mankind that they might believe in Him and His message. **«O mankind, the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so believe; it is better for you.»** *(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:170)*

Trusting the words and insight of one who presents another undoubtedly implies trust in him who has been presented and that he will be respected and loved. Prophet Muhammad is the one presented by God; **«And who is more truthful than God in statement?»** *(Surah an-Nisaa', 4:122)*

Muslims were the first to believe in Prophet Muhammad and benefit from the enlightenment he brought. As a result, they loved him, for once a good thing is sampled it soon becomes familiar, cherished and a means of success. **«So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him – it is those who will be the successful.»***(Surah al-A'raaf, 7:157)*

3. They love him because he is the means by which they were rightly guided and their lives illuminated, for it is he who conveyed to them book of guidance and light, the noble Qur'an.

Prophet Muhammad was the means by which Muslims are guided:

- **«And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.»** *(Surah an-Nahl, 16:89)*
- **«And indeed, [O Muhammad], you guide to a straight path.»***(Surah ash-Shura, 42:52)*

Prophet Muhammad was the means of illuminating their lives, their consciences, their minds and their hearts through the revelation he brought from God:

- **«So is one whose breast God has expanded to [accept]**

Islam and he is guided by a light from his Lord [like one whose heart rejects it]?»

(Surah az-Zumar, 39:22)

• «God has sent down to you a reminder – a messenger reciting to you the distinct verses of God that He may bring out those who believe and do righteous deeds from darknesses into the light.» *(Surah at-Talaaq, 65:10-11)*

The commencement of guidance and source of light and enlightenment was when Prophet Muhammad informed Muslims about their Lord, their Creator and their God, and taught them how their relationship of belief, worship and conduct with God should be.

Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the one who taught us and implanted in our hearts and minds the belief that none created the universe but God, none maintains it and runs it according to a magnificently precise system but God, none created man in the best form and honored him but God, none has knowledge of the unseen but God, none can implement whatever He wills but God, none can guide to the truth but God and none is worthy of worship but God. To Him alone, without partner, is due sincere worship; He alone is with every human being wherever he might be; He alone knows what is concealed within the heart; He is the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all existence, who is not overtaken by weariness or sleep; He holds the keys of the unknown and knows all that is within the land and sea.

«Whatever is in the heavens and earth exalts God, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. His is the dominion of the heavens and earth. He gives life and

causes death, and He is over all things competent. He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant and the Intimate, and He is, of all things, Knowing. It is He who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein; and He is with you wherever you are. And God, of what you do, is Seeing. His is the dominion of the heavens and earth. And to God are returned [all] matters. He causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night, and He is Knowing of that within the breasts.» *(Surah al-Hadeed, 57:1-6)*

«God – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His footstool extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.» *(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255)*

«And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darknesses of the earth

and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record.» *(Surah al-An'aam, 6:59)*

This knowledge of God is a source of unique happiness for people endowed with great minds, free consciences and upright souls.

Every person having a sound psychological and mental outlook longs in his mind and heart to know and love the Lord who created him and to draw near to Him through whatever method He might authorize for worship and deeds.

Before Muhammad was sent by God as a prophet and messenger, an Arab, Zayd bin 'Amr bin Nufayl, was searching for a way to know and worship his Lord. He was confused and did not know how to go about it, so he supplicated, «O God, if I knew the method You like best I would worship you according to it, but I do not know.»

The method unknown to this man who had a great yearning to establish a sound relationship with his Lord was introduced by Prophet Muhammad, and through it we can know our Lord, believe in Him, love Him, worship Him, praise Him day and night and remember Him often.

Refined and ethical manners naturally demand that Muslims love the man who brought this true happiness to them, the contentment of a sound relationship with God, the most Merciful, the Great, the Exalted, the Kind, the Affectionate.

4. Muslims also love Prophet Muhammad because he is a special mercy to them on account of their belief in him, in addition to his being a general mercy to all mankind.

- **«There has certainly come to you a Messenger from**

among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; he is concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.» *(Surah at-Tawbah, 9:128)*

• **«[It is] an ear of goodness for you that believes in God and believes the believers and is a mercy to those who believe among you.»**

(Surah at-Tawbah, 9:61)

• **«The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves, and his wives are [in the position of] their mothers.»**

(Surah al-Ahzaab, 33:6)

5 . They also love him because one will obtain God's love by following him. **«Say, [O Muhammad], If you should love God, then follow me, [so] God will love you and forgive you your sins. And God is Forgiving and Merciful.»** *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:31)*

6. And they love him because he struggled, endured, stood firm, and suffered abuse until the religion was complete and the blessing obtained. He conveyed Islam to them in pure form, perfected and preserved by God. Hence, when he addressed the 100,000 Muslims present during the Farewell Pilgrimage, enquiring of them, «When you are asked about me, what will you say?» They replied, «We will testify that you fulfilled [the trust], delivered [the message] and advised [the people].» He said, «O God, witness it, O God, witness it, O God, witness it.» He meant: «O God, witness that I have conveyed the religion of Islam to the people, complete and perfect as You intended.»

Evidences of Muslims Love for Their Prophet

First, he was loved during his lifetime and among his supporters. His companions respected and revered him; they hastened to respond to his call, listen to and memorize his words, obey his orders, learn and follow his sunnah (teachings and examples). And they were always ready to protect him with their own lives.

What was the primary motive for all that? The greatest motive was love, the love those companions had for their Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him). Here are a few examples that serve as evidence and show the love of early Muslims for their Prophet:

1. Abu Bakr wanted to accompany the Prophet on the hijrah (emigration from Makkah) to Madinah, and the Prophet granted him that wish. While on the journey, Abu Bakr would walk ahead of the Prophet for a time and then behind him for a time. When the Prophet asked him why he did that, Abu Bakr said, «O Messenger of God, when I remember the pursuers I walk behind you and when I remember those waiting in ambush I walk in front of you.» The Prophet said, «Abu Bakr, if something happened would you rather it happened to you than to me?» He meant, «Do you mean to protect me with your own life?» Abu Bakr said, «Yes, by Him who sent you with the truth, any disaster should strike me and not you.» And Abu Bakr used to say frequently, «We would ransom our fathers and mothers for you.»
2. Umar bin al-Khattab would tell the Prophet, «You are dearer to me than my own self.»
3. On the eve of the emigration, Ali bin Abi Talib spent the

night in the Prophet ,s bed to protect the Prophet with his life out of love for him. Ali was asked, «How was your love for God ,s Messenger?» He said, «By God he was dearer to us than our properties, our children, our parents and than cold water is to someone who is thirsty.»

4. When the inhabitants of Makkah drove Zayd bin ad-Dathannah out of the Sacred Mosque to kill him, Abu Sufyan bin Harb said, «I ask you by God, Zayd, would you not like Muhammad to be with us now in your place to strike off his head?» Zayd replied, «By God, I would not like Muhammad in the place where he is now to even be pricked by a thorn while I am sitting [safe] with my family.» Abu Sufyan said, «I have never seen among people a person who is loved by another more than the companions of Muhammad love him.»
5. When Muslims went out of Madinah to defend it after receiving information to the effect that the enemy planned to attack, the battle of Uhud took place. While the battle was raging, Abu Talhah al-Ansari made himself a human shield to protect the Prophet from enemy arrows. To this act of love he added words of love, saying, «O Prophet of God, dearer than my father, do not move away lest an arrow should strike you; my chest will protect yours.»
6. When the Prophet entered Madinah at the end of his emigration journey, the Muslims felt as if light was spreading everywhere. But when the Prophet died, they felt as if the whole city was covered in darkness. One of his companions, Anas bin Malik, said, «On the

day the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) arrived in Madinah, everything in it was covered with light. But the day he died, everything in it was dark. We had barely finished with the Prophet's funeral rites when our hearts rejected us.» Only one who is devoted will see light when the beloved is present and darkness when he is absent.

Second, he has been loved by Muslims in every era. The Prophet said, «Some of those in my nation who love me most will be after me. One of them would wish he could see me even for [the price] of his family and property.»

This love that had been foretold became a historical reality following the Prophet ,s passing. There are many various indications and manifestations of it, among which are the following:

1. Every Muslim longs to see the Prophet in a dream. When someone is fortunate enough to do so, he feels an overwhelming happiness filling his soul, heart, and consciousness, and his heart keeps yearning for another similar dream.
2. Learning and following the sunnah of the Prophet in word and deed is something motivated by love. And at the same time, it is a means of obtaining God's love: **«Say [to the people, O Muhammad], If you should love God, then follow me, and God will love you.»** *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:31)*
3. Muslims travel specifically to visit the Prophet's mosque and then offer greetings of peace to the Prophet and call God's blessings and peace upon him.
4. Invocation of God's blessings and peace upon the Prophet is done after the call for prayer, during every

prayer and while supplicating, during the Friday sermon, at the beginning and end of books and documents and throughout the entire day and night.

5. Thousands of volumes have been written about his biography, his sunnah and his description, and tens of thousands of beautiful descriptive poems have been written praising him.
6. His noble person and status is always defended.

Among the evidences and manifestations of the love Muslims have for their Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) is that they are always prepared to sacrifice themselves for his sake. Hence, they immediately arise to defend his noble person whenever anyone abuses him. It is defense necessitated by belief in and love for him.**«So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him – it is those who will be the successful.»***(Surah al-A'raaf, 7:157)* Supporting him is an important aspect of belief and love, and this undoubtedly includes defending his noble person and honored status.

It is incorrect to say that since God has guaranteed protection of His Prophet and said: **«And God will protect you from the people.»** *(Surah al-Ma'idah, 5:67)* and has said: **«Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers,»** *(Surah al-Hijr, 15:95)*

that there is no need for Muslims to defend him. No doubt, God did guard His Prophet against harm until he had conveyed the message and fulfilled the trust completely and perfectly. After that he passed on to his Lord well-pleased and pleasing to Him, pure, blessed and triumphant. However,

there is no methodological or practical contradiction between God's defense of His Prophet and his defense by Muslims. Evidence of the perfect harmony and integration between God's role and that of Muslims is in the following:

1. God has undertaken to defend believers: **«Indeed, God defends those who have believed. Indeed, God does not like everyone treacherous and ungrateful.»** *(Surah al-Hajj, 22:38)* However, He still made it obligatory for them to defend themselves: **«Fight in the way of God those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, God does not like transgressors.»***(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:190)*
2. God, the Almighty, whose decree is preordained and who but says, «Be,» and it is, is self-sufficient and needs no defense. But He tests the faith of believers through their willingness and readiness to defend and support His cause:

- **«O you who have believed, if you support God, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.»** *(Surah Muhammad, 47:7)*
- **«...So that God may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen. Indeed, God is Powerful and Exalted in Might.»***(Surah al-Hadeed, 57:25)*
- **«O you who have believed, be supporters of God.»** *(Surah as-Saff, 61:14)*

In short, God has linked His ability in such matters to the application of causes, which include the means ordained by Him in the form of free, voluntary actions according to the different conditions and abilities of believers.

The position of Prophet Muhammad in the hearts of Muslims is unassailable and continuous. Love for him constantly fills their hearts and souls and they declare this love openly. They express their love in various forms, one of which is resolutely and persistently defending his elevated position against the abuse of any assailant.

While they love, respect and praise the Prophet, Muslims do not allow the balance of truth and justice to be tilted in their minds. For in the Muslim ,s creed there are very distinct differences between the status of prophethood and the status of divinity.

God alone is the Creator, Provider, the ever-Living, the Sustainer, the Giver of Life, the Causer of Death, the Knower of what is unseen and seen, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent. He alone is the true object of worship who is worshipped by right. He is the Exalted, the One, the Everlasting, who is unique and never merges with any of His creatures nor do they with Him.

As great in repute, high in position, and close to his Lord as he is, the Prophet was but one of God’s creations, a repentant, faithful and exceptional servant.

• **«Exalted is He who took His Servant [i.e., Prophet Muhammad] by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.»** *(Surah al-Israa’, 17:1)*

• **«Then he approached and descended, and was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer. And he revealed to His Servant what he revealed.»** *(Surah an-Najm, 53:8-10)*

• **«It is He who sends down upon His Servant**

[Muhammad] verses of clear evidence that He may bring you out from darknesses into the light. And indeed, God is to you Kind and Merciful.» *(Surah al-Hadeed, 57:9)*

Thus, the human nature of prophets has been duly confirmed.

• **«It is not for a human [prophet] that God should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, Be servants to me rather than God, but [instead, he would say], Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied. Nor could he order you to take the angels and prophets as lords. Would he order you to disbelief after you had been Muslims?»** *(Surah Aali 'Imraan, 3:79-80)*

• **«Their messengers said to them, We are only men like you, but God confers favor upon whom He wills of His servants.»** *(Surah Ibraheem, 14:11)*

• **«Say, I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord – let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.»** *(Surah al-Kahf, 18:110)*

Confirmation of the human nature of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) has certain objectives and practical considerations:

• The first is to keep the religious creed pure and not confuse prophethood with divinity.

• The second is that the human nature of the Prophet makes it possible for other human beings to follow his

example, for he is a man like themselves and not an angel from another species which they could not possibly imitate. **«Say, If there were upon the earth angels walking securely, We would have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as a messenger.»** *(Surah al-Israa', 17:95)*

It is true that the Prophet shares this human nature with all other human beings, but he surpasses them by innumerable degrees due to his being chosen by God, due to the revelation he received, due to the honor of his ascent to his Lord and having reached the furthest boundary of existence, and due to the distinction of having received divine love, protection and care. For God had instructed him: **«Be patient for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you are under Our observation.»** *(Surah at-Tur, 52:48)*